

Preach above the personal

PORTRAIT OF A PROPHET:

Lessons from the Preaching of John Owen

By Martyn Cowan

The Latimer Trust. 42 pages. £3.99

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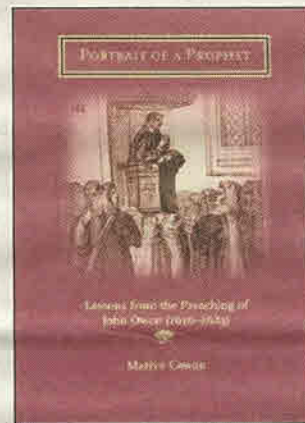
This little book (originally given as a lecture) outlines much of the content of John Owen's preaching.

According to Martyn Cowan's research, Owen (1616–1683) believed that his listeners were living in a time of unique blessing. However, Owen also believed that these people were required to respond to the signs that God was sending them in what he saw as apocalyptic events taking place (such as the Great Fire of London). Cowan draws some conclusions at the end of the book.

Not too hard

Cowan's aim is to explore the legacy of Owen's preaching in a historically accurate way. He writes at the beginning that the book is going to point out what he sees as 'blind spots' in Owen's thinking. However, I don't believe Cowan is as hard on Owen as he claims he's going to be (which I think is a good thing).

The book is very accessible in most places, but be warned, there are sentences with phrases like 'dogmatic providentialism' and 'historicist millenarian eschatology' that may



put people off.

The best thing about this booklet is the last two pages. Here's where we find the thing everyone likes about history – how it applies to us today. These are great pointers for preachers: stop preaching individualistically; think about the significance of the events of your day; declare more of the end-time aspects of the gospel.

If you're a preacher, this is definitely worth a read. If you don't preach, it will give you plenty to pray for.

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